

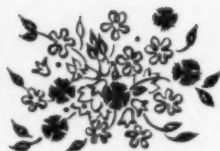
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# *Party Service*

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# Party Service



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## Buffet Service

**T**HE BUFFET service is a time-saving, attractive, "help-yourself" plan suitable for family meals or for guests. It is especially suitable when a large group is entertained in a moderate-sized house, or when the hostess doesn't know how many guests to expect. It also works well in a small apartment.

The buffet meal can be served in the kitchen, dining room, living room, on the porch, or in the yard. Chairs may be placed in an adjoining room or in groups around the room if they are well out of the way of the serving table. Small tables, such as card tables or end tables, can be placed about the house so the guests may carry their filled plates to these tables. Trays are convenient if the plate is to be held on the lap.

## The linen

In all buffet service, the table is the center of attraction and a challenge to the creative ability and talent of the hostess. The setting depends upon the occasion. For example, breakfast parties and supper parties usually are gay and colorful. A red checkered cloth and bright pottery may be appropriate for a New Year's party. For more formal occasions, a tea cloth of embroidered linen or a lace cloth is spread on the table and the best china is used. The food, dishes, silverware, and napkins are placed on the table in an attractive, orderly manner. Hot pads are needed if hot dishes are to be placed on the table.

## The table

A large table is best so that the setting is not crowded. An extra serving table, card table, or the buffet (sideboard) is convenient for napkins, silverware, and beverages. If card tables are used, each may be set with linen, silverware, napkins, and water glasses to do away with the necessity of carrying them. The buffet table has more space if the silverware and napkins are placed on a side table. Occasionally it may be more convenient for someone to carry the coffee cups on a large tray to each small table.

The general arrangement of a buffet setting depends first upon the position of the table. The location should be convenient for the hostess and for the people serving themselves. If the dining room is small or if the table is in the living room, it is wise to push it back near the wall. This leaves three sides of the table available for service. The decoration is then placed on the fourth side near the wall. If the table is in the center of the room, with four sides available for service, the decoration may be placed in the center of the table.

### The centerpiece

The decorations and centerpieces may have more height than those placed on other tables. Flowers, greens, fruit, vegetables, or candles are appropriate. Tall candles add dignity to the buffet table at an evening party. Special themes can be carried out in the table decorations for such holiday seasons as Christmas, Easter, and Fourth of July.

### Other considerations

The following points are important in *planning, arranging, and serving* the buffet meal:

1. Make the plans well in advance.
2. Limit the buffet menu to two courses—a main course and a dessert course. The main course usually consists of one hot food served from a casserole, platter, or other serving dish, a hot vegetable or a bowl of salad, a dish of assorted relishes, and a plate of buttered rolls or sandwiches. Tea, coffee, chocolate, milk, or a choice of these may be offered during the main course and the dessert.
3. Avoid creamed foods that are thin or foods that are juicy.
4. Select a menu that requires no knives, sherbert glasses, goblets, or other equipment difficult to hold on a plate on the lap.
5. Use a large plate for the main course.
6. Serve buttered breads to do away with the use of a butter spreader.
7. Arrange the food on the table so that the plates are picked up first, with trays, silverware, linen, and beverages picked up later.
8. Avoid the "bread line" effect of having a large group line up. The hostess should arrange to have groups of three or four go to the table at one time.

### Types of Service

OF the three types of buffet service—*informal, semi-formal, and formal*—select the one best suited to the occasion, to the number of guests, and to the amount of help you have.

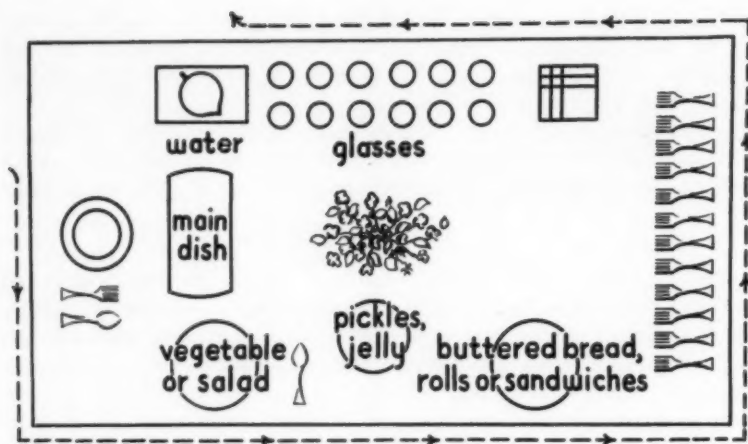


FIGURE 1. Buffet plan of service with the table in the center of the room. Both sides and the ends of the table are used.

#### Informal buffet service

The informal buffet service is used for the family or for a small group of close friends. The food, china, and the silverware for the first course only are on the buffet table when the guests are invited to the dining room. Each person helps himself to a plate, then to the foods. The silverware, linen, and beverages may be picked up later. The hostess usually asks one guest to serve himself, and the others follow his lead. The hostess may ask the guests to help themselves to second helpings or she may pass the dishes of food. If the hostess passes the dishes of food, she is kept busy waiting on her guests instead of entertaining them. When it is time for dessert, the hostess clears the serving dishes of the first course from the buffet table and sets the table for dessert. She asks the guests to leave their first course plates on a service table set up for that purpose and to serve themselves to dessert.

#### Semi-formal buffet service

The semi-formal service is used more often than is the informal. The hostess may serve the main course or a friend of the hostess is asked to sit at the table to serve the main dish. Another may serve the salad and pour the beverage. The guests help themselves to breads, relishes, nuts, candies, silverware, and linen. The hostess clears off the first-course dishes from the buffet table and sets the table for the dessert course. A friend of the hostess may take the soiled plates from the guests. When serving large groups, the hostess may find it easier to serve dessert to each one rather than have guests return to the table.

### Formal buffet service

The formal buffet service, used for a large number of guests, requires service. If it is convenient, the table may be set on the porch or at one end of the living room so that more guests may see it. Waiters pass the filled plates from the table to the guests. This service is less formal than the Russian service when guests are seated at the table.

### Teas

A TEA may be a very simple occasion for a few guests or it may be a large gathering. It provides a more friendly and informal atmosphere than does a formal reception and frequently takes its place.

A tea is given to introduce a friend, a guest, or a person of prominence, or to extend hospitality to a few friends.

### The hour

The usual hours are from three to five o'clock. At a formal tea, guests remain for about thirty minutes unless some entertainment is provided.

### The menu

The menu consists of a beverage and one or more foods that should be light and dainty. The drink may be hot or cold. Occasionally, a choice is offered. Small dainty sandwiches, tiny cakes or cookies, nuts, and candies may be served.

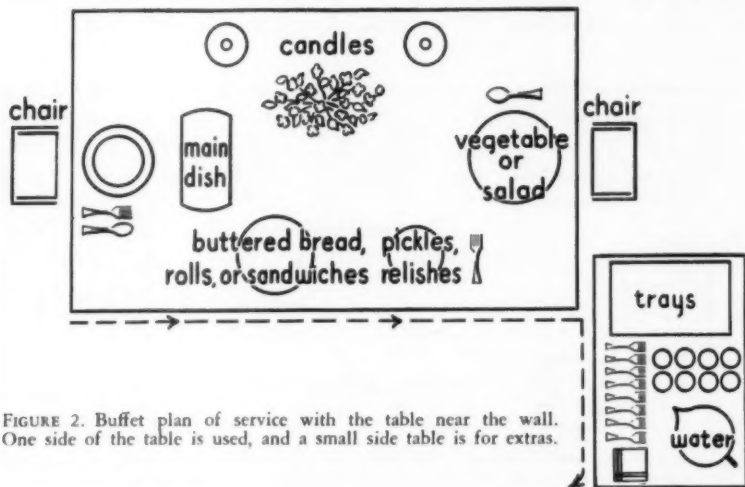
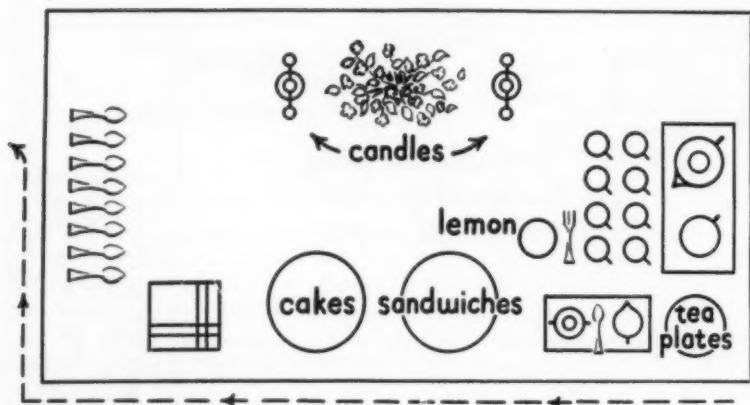


FIGURE 2. Buffet plan of service with the table near the wall. One side of the table is used, and a small side table is for extras.



FIGURES 3 and 4. Informal tea service for a small group of friends.



## Types of service

### Small, informal

At a small, informal tea, the tea service usually is placed on a small table (see cover). The hostess pours the beverage, serves cream and sugar, and gives the plate with napkin and spoon to the guest. Each guest helps himself to the food.

### Large, formal or informal

At a large tea, formal or informal, the table is the center of interest. A lace or embroidered cloth makes a suitable covering. Attractively arranged flowers usually form the centerpiece. Lighted candles lend a pleasant atmosphere if the shades are drawn. The table should express the individuality of the hostess.

The beverage service for a tea is on a tray placed directly in front of the one who pours. The plates are arranged in a small stack at the left and the cups are put near the pourer (see figures 5 and 6, back cover).

The hostess usually pours at small teas, but at larger functions a friend is asked to do this for her. At large teas, food is arranged on both sides of the table and two people are asked to pour.

At small teas, each guest, upon the invitation of the hostess, goes to the tea table and is served with the beverage. She then helps herself to the other foods, a napkin, and silver. Tea-sized napkins are used. When the guest has finished her tea, she places her used plate and napkin upon some convenient table, or they are removed by the hostess.

At large teas, friends of the hostess usually preside in the dining room. When double service is used, one hostess sits at each end of the table to pour the beverage. Others assist with the serving by seeing that small groups at a time are taken to the tea table.

At a formal tea the cup of tea is brought to the guest. Then cream and sugar and the plates of food are passed by those assisting with the serving. The food never should be placed on the plate for the guest.

Those who assist the hostess should observe the arrangement of the tables and keep this order when they replace the food plates. The table should look attractive and have full service plates at all times.

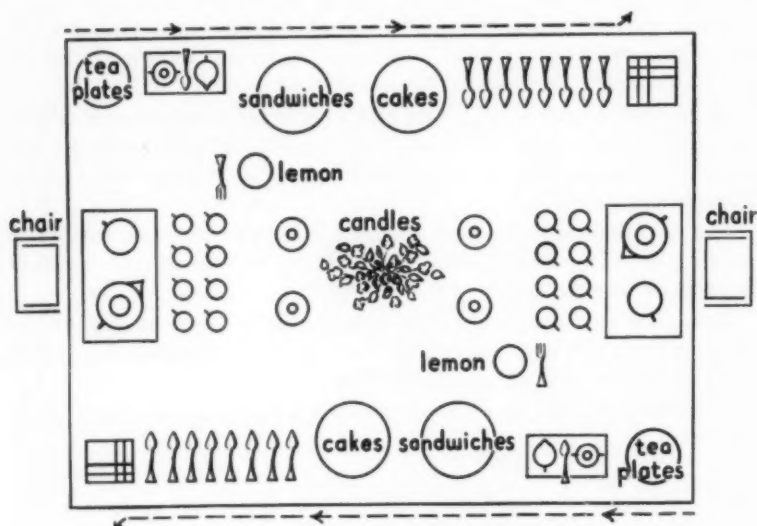
As guests finish with their tea, a waitress takes their plates, two at a time, to the kitchen.

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FIGURES 5 AND 6. A double tea service is used and both sides of the table.



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